

Christian Courier

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Peace program moves from courthouse to workplace

Boards, daycares calling to learn 'tricky' talk skills

Irene Bom

WINNIPEG — You make a wrong move at the lunch table at work and a colleague lashes out at what "you always do."

You're losing your case at a board meeting and you try to gain ground by voicing what "everybody thinks."

They're called conflict openings, and according to Jan Schmidt, we all have to learn

how to drop them if we want to resolve conflict.

"Communication skills are the trickiest thing to learn," says Schmidt, a program co-ordinator with Mediation Services in Winnipeg. "We think we know how to communicate, but when emotions get hooked into the situation, we bring out techniques designed to get even with the other person."

Mediation Services has been active at peacemaking since local Mennonites started the program back in 1979. The Winnipeg program, like others across the country, was modeled after a pioneer project introduced by the Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., in 1974.

The original focus of many such programs was on criminal

offenders and their victims. Now program directors are beginning to apply the insights gained from two decades of running that program to less extreme conflict situations, such as workplaces.

The interest seems to be there. In 1989 Mediation Services spent \$6,000 on interpersonal reconciliation training; this year Schmidt says that fig-

ure may jump to as high as \$100,000.

"Boards, daycare centres, university departments — they're all calling us to learn how to resolve conflicts so that they can work together," says Schmidt.

Victim offender reconciliation successful, but not always popular



Patricia Kornelsen
Irene Bom

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Patricia Kornelsen felt like a bit of a lone duck last August.

Kornelsen, director of the recently formed Victim Of-

fender Reconciliation Program (VORP) in Niagara, was waiting for her turn to present a brief to a hearing of a federal justice committee.

The panel was seeking input on crime laws, and the message in the region still reeling from the murder of local teen Kristen French was clear: get tough.

Kornelsen had come with another message. Under the program she is hoping will catch on as an alternative to sentences for minor crimes, offenders and victims meet to hear the other's side of the incident. Both then draft and sign a contract in which the offender pledges to restore in some way the harm done.

lished versions of the program say the approach has proved itself since it was introduced to Canada in Kitchener, Ont., two decades ago.

"Ninety per cent of the offenders and victims we match

come up with an agreement. And 95 per cent of the agreements are kept, compared to 50 per cent of court orders," says Jan Schmidt, who co-ordinates the Winnipeg branch of the program.

Sixty volunteers arrange nearly 1,000 matches a year in the Winnipeg program, the largest one in Canada.

Prosecutors refer persons charged with minor crimes to

See IS -p.2...

Romanian religion law delayed over 'Christian education' dispute

Randy Tift

BUCHAREST, Romania (NNI)—Ratification of a long-awaited law on religious freedom has been delayed by a dispute between Romanian Protestants and Orthodox over the establishment of religious education by non-Orthodox entities. The debate is the latest in a series of controversies raised by the draft legislation, which has been in process for three years.

The Romanian Parliament had scheduled debate on the proposed legislation for November, but this was postponed after Protestants and Orthodox raised differences over the form of religious education in Romania. However, Romanian director of religious affairs Gheorghe Vladutescu says he still hopes the law can be enacted early this year.

Vladutescu is trying to establish the right for Romanian Protestants and Catholics to create Christian denominational

schools. But Romanian Protestants say that Orthodox church leaders are trying to prevent those schools from being established.

A familiar argument

Orthodox leaders have argued that state-approved religious education should be limited to the public schools. This year, the official public school curriculum included religious education for the first

time. Courses are taught by clergy who are paid by the state.

Vladutescu says that all denominations are permitted to appoint teachers for students to learn in their own confession. But he admits that minority denominations are not actively seeking teachers to place in the public schools. In fact, not enough Orthodox priests are available yet to teach courses

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Proved itself

That call for mutual understanding is not always popular when crime seems to be on the upswing.

"What I was proposing started to seem a little radical even to me at that point," she admits.

But directors of more estab-

Thinkbit

A pastor asked to choose between church education and outreach, replied:
which is more important: inhaling or exhaling?
From a meditation by Lloyd Wiseman

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News

Romanians argue over school funding

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to the majority population of Orthodox students.

Still, Romanian Orthodox leaders insist that "education is for the state," according to Fr. Ioan Sauca, spokesperson for the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch. "And why should the state pay for [denominational schools] to educate their own children in their religion? Tax-payers have the right for their children to be taught their own religion in the public schools."

But Protestants argue that relying on public schools "leaves religious education in the hands of the Orthodox," according to Ioan Peia, director of the Evangelical Alliance, a

coalition of Baptist, Pentecostal and Brethren churches.

Religious education is guaranteed in Romania's 1991 Constitution. But the delay in ratifying a religion law had prevented its implementation until this year. To break the logjam, the Ministry of Education signed a protocol establishing mandatory religion classes while disputes about the proposed law are being worked out.

The Orthodox objections to religious schools reflect fears about Protestants winning Orthodox Romanians into their churches, especially by the strength of Western financial backing.

Protestants argue that they are only evangelizing people unaffiliated with any church.

Romanian lawmakers dismissed an Orthodox attempt to include an "anti-proselytism" provision in the draft law earlier in the debate.

Opposition to a state church

Religious education is the most important provision in the sweeping and controversial religion law that Vladutescu has now been working on for more than three years. The 55-year old religious affairs chief has steadily earned credit from many churches for seeking the input and approval of the

leaders of Romania's 14 recognized religious denominations.

However, two other disputes between denominations have also contributed in delaying the process. Romania's Orthodox have demanded that the law recognize them as the "national church" of the country. All but two of the other denominations have protested the move to codify the preeminence of the Orthodox Church, which claims 87 per cent of the population.

In a second stumbling block, some Protestant groups have expressed concern that by instituting state subsidies for denominations, the law will favor the Orthodox Church

over minority confessions. Both the Baptists and the Adventists have refused state payments to religious workers, such as pastors; all other denominations have accepted the state salaries. The law Vladutescu hopes to send to Parliament in early 1994 would codify the state subsidies but provide tax breaks instead for dissenting denominations.

Observers on all sides believe much is at stake in the religion law. Most agree, however, that the Orthodox dispute with religious minorities is not likely to end with the passage of whatever version of the anticipated law finally prevails.

No easy ride to reconciliation, says four-time break-in victim

Face to face meetings mean dropping labels



New York city jail — the police force chaplain for St. Catharines and Grimsby, Ont., could hardly be called naive about crime.

But the recent series of load-ups close to home has made him reflect on the whole process from a victim's point of view.

And he admits that matching the theory of restorative justice and reconciliation to practice is anything but easy.

"I don't think I have any animosity or anger toward the offenders. I think I feel a strong sense of hopelessness," says Bolton.

"I can't get inside the mind of someone who can take two rings which had been in my wife's family for 250 years, who can't realize value beyond an insurance settlement," he adds.

Getting crime victims to see inside the minds of offenders is precisely the point of VORP (Victim Offender Reconciliation Program), which tries to bring both parties together at a home or coffee shop to let each tell his or her story.

But Bolton, a VORP board member, says many victims are not jumping to hear such stories.

"In a sense I didn't care who did it or what happened to them. I was just feeling hurt and violated," he says.

Bolton says he probably would have agreed to a reconciliation meeting if VORP had been further along and the of-

fender had wanted one, but "I probably wouldn't have initiated it."

Part of that reluctance stems from the sceptic in him: "I'm kind of cynical that a value system without conscience can be turned around."

Another part may stem from the fact that what's needed for such a meeting to work, as he describes it, is a change in attitude toward the other party. And that's just plain hard.

"When people meet face to face, they have to treat each other as persons," he explains.

"There is no such thing as an offender and a victim — those are just labels that keep people from each other. People are people."

When asked if he has forgiven the offenders, he re-

sponds that "at a certain point I decided to let go of the anger and forget it. Forgiveness is not for the other person. It's for me so that I can get on with my life," he asserts.

Bolton adds that his wife still "has a lot of less focused hostility" that translates into stereotyping an entire group such as youth on welfare — another common victim response, he says.

Bolton says he stays involved with programs like VORP despite the "load of ammunition" for cynics of reconciliation.

"In the occasional case, there might be a change of behavior that would make it all worth it. And there are always the victims to help."

Irene Bom

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Two things stand out for Rev. David Bolton about 1992. The first is his work to launch a program in the Niagara region to reconcile offenders and their victims. The second is a wave of break-ins into his church and home. Theory and practice, as he likes to say.

Whatever the terms for both events, his rough ride between them helps him steer clear of charges that he's either a bleeding heart who's soft on crime or a cynic.

The first theft happened in January when his wallet was stolen from his locked church office. Four months later it was

stolen from the same place, and a "credit card shopping spree followed," says the rector of Grace Anglican church in St. Catharines, Ont.

Then, during the spring week that murder victim Kristen French was abducted in the north end of the city, burglars unloaded four lawnmowers from the church shed. And in July Bolton and his wife returned home from vacation to find their house ransacked and picked through, this time by an organized break-and-enter gang.

Not naive

After years of involvement with criminal offenders — including a counselling stint in a

Is faith essential to peace process?

...continued from p.1.

VORP as long as these persons don't have long criminal histories. If they agree to provide restitution to victims and fulfil a contract, criminal sentences are stayed.

Kornelsen's program describes itself as church based. Other such programs are moving away from those roots to become non-profit community groups. The Winnipeg program took that route last spring, although the Mennonite Central Committee remains its largest funder.

"The fact that Jesus is the Son of God is a theological issue that is not essential for facilitating the restoration process," asserts Schmidt. Most of the current staff are still affiliated with a church, but that requirement will no longer hold for new appointments.

Kornelsen maintains instead that a "Christian background" is essential to understanding reconciliation work.

"Otherwise, persons tend to legalism and tend to side with the victim," she says.

PHOTO: IRENE BOM

David Bolton shows the drawer from which his wallet was stolen.

PRESSREVIEW



Carl D. Tuyl

The House was not sitting, so Ottawa was deserted and many people scrambled for southern comfort. Here in the East it was so cold that the polar bear swimmers — those half-wits who demonstrate their masochism by jumping in some lake on New Year's Day — came out like ice sculptures. The city of Nome, Alaska, 250 km from the Arctic Circle, has been warmer this week than some places in Florida.

★ ★ ★

The *Ottawa Citizen* reports interesting news from British Columbia: Grace McCarthy, whose technicolor hair owes a major debt to Clairaut and who has retired more times than Frank Sinatra, is trying for yet another comeback. This time in the riding of Matsqui. What is even more of a threat is the fact that there are rumors around that even Wilhelmus Maria VanderZalm might try a comeback.

★ ★ ★

Good news comes from Winnipeg: New Flyer Industries Ltd. has landed an agreement worth \$80 million to supply up to 300 buses for the American city of New Orleans.

★ ★ ★

Here is an item that proves that there are always two sides to a story. The *Financial Post* reports triumphantly that Ontario Hydro chairperson Maurice Strong has succeeded in getting a grip on the utilities' wild spending ways. But another newspaper says "[Millionaire] Maurice Strong... has billed the province \$94,000 in expenses in his first 11 months at the giant utility."

★ ★ ★

Eleven Canadians were taken prisoner by drunken Serbs, but this week's winner is Sgt. Jacques Beaulieu, whose

professionalism and nerves of steel probably saved the lives of the peacekeepers as Serbs fired near the Canadians' feet. Get that man a medal — and a promotion; or better yet, both.

★ ★ ★

Newfoundland's policies cut new doctors' fees by 50 per cent if they set up practice in St. John's. The policy might be extended to include other urban areas. Doctors don't like the rule.

★ ★ ★

Here follows another lesson in our course "What is a Billion?" We offer this course as a service to the government so we can all understand each other. So, what is a billion? If you had begun spending \$1,000 every single day of every week since Christ was born 2,000 years ago, there would still be plenty of money left today to subscribe to *Christian Courier* for the rest of your life.

★ ★ ★

During that strange Dutch campaign in Indonesia a doctor at a remote post was uncertain about treatment for one of his patients. He radioed a question to his field hospital: "Have a case of beriberi (a tropical disease). What shall I do?" The hospital answered: "Give it to the Marines, they drink anything."

★ ★ ★

Economies in Asia are exploding. Chrysler sold the Lamborghini line to a group of

Indonesian businesspeople, among them President Suharto's youngest son. Indonesia's economy has averaged a seven per cent annual growth rate since 1967.

★ ★ ★

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering has apologized for the behavior of one of Vice President Gore's bodyguards who shoved a Russian general aside during a visit by Gore to St. Petersburg this month. Imagine shoving a general!

★ ★ ★

Egyptian Muslim extremists injured eight Austrian tourists when their bus was attacked in a crowded narrow street near an ancient Cairo mosque. The extremists are trying to topple the mostly secular government of President Hosni Mubarak by trying to further weaken Egypt's chronically poor economy by frightening away tourists.

Kurds in Turkey have resorted to the same tactics. The fighting in Turkey between government troops and the Kurds is one of the bloodiest (and least known) civil wars in the world.

★ ★ ★

And as if we did not have enough civil wars going, Mexican peasants are staging an uprising which is being suppressed at the cost of lots of blood.

★ ★ ★

Slovaks are beginning to have second thoughts about

their divorce from the Czech Republic. Since their separation Slovaks have experienced a 35 per cent drop in their living standard.

★ ★ ★

The talks between Israel and the PLO have hit a logjam and floods in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and France have caused damage totalling hundreds of millions of dollars.

★ ★ ★

President Clinton was to have visited Moscow on Jan. 12. Would Boris invite him to a boar hunt like he did Monsieur?

★ ★ ★

The *New York Times* reports that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, otherwise known as the CIA, reports that the U.S. Central Intelligence believes that North Korea has one or two nuclear bombs. And detonators powerful enough to rip off a hand have been washing ashore along the French Atlantic coast since last month. Apparently they were part of a cargo of 34,000 such devices which were spilled into the Atlantic by a Cypriot vessel. Now a cargo of diapers is lost at sea

and could wash up along the Brittany coast.

★ ★ ★

Up to six million people are moving through Europe seeking asylum. Bosnians and Georgians are fleeing war; Turks and Russians are looking for day labor; Algerians and Moroccans are fleeing oppressive political regimes. From West Africa come Senegalese, Chanaians, Malis and Ivory Coast citizen, all looking for a safe place to stay and to earn a bit of a living. Makes you humble and thankful to be a Canadian, doesn't it?

★ ★ ★

And here is one more item from the 1872 rules for teachers: "Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty."

Carl Tuyl is chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Church and is a member of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

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Editorial

North American Christianity stifles softly

The world of religion can get pretty soft sometimes, soft to the point of making one flabby and unfit for spiritual warfare.

This thought came to me after visiting a few Christian bookstores. I looked at the sections in which books had been placed. They read like a list of Pabulum foods: Family Christian Living; Devotional Literature; Bible; Biography; Children; Youth Concerns; Women's Concerns; Men's Concerns; World Religions; Cults.

Most of the books placed under these rubrics offer personal stuff that makes you look inside yourself. There is a time and place for that, of course. But there is very little on these shelves that draws you into bigger issues such as social justice, legal ethics, responsible economics, the meaning of money, the relation between politics and principles,

the importance of city landscaping, the commercialization of sports, to name only a few.

I'm not blaming the owners of the Christian bookstores for their limited selection of books. They sell what the Christian, mostly evangelical, world produces. But I found myself wishing that these books were surrounded by the kinds of books you normally find in a library. Even if they are secular books, at least they get the browser out of this mushy mood of self-spirituality and remind him or her that God's world is much bigger than soul searching and relationship building.

Our Christ is so tall

The same must be said for what seems to preoccupy Christians in their worship services. There is a trend in North American churches to focus more and more on the personal relationship between God and self and between Christians and their neighbors. I know, it's very important to acknowledge that salvation has that personal dimension. Jesus Christ must be seen not only as the head of the church but also as the one who lives in my heart.

But there is more to the Christian faith than our personal salvation and our relationships. Colossians 1 is very clear on that. It talks eloquently about the supremacy of Christ.

Christ is identified as the head of the church. But as head of the church he is also the one by whom all things in heaven and on earth were

created and in whom all things, visible and invisible, hold together. Wow! That's no small claim.

Christians are people who have been rescued "from the kingdom of darkness and brought ... into the kingdom of the Son," writes Paul in the same chapter of Colossians. Being brought into the kingdom of the one in whom all things hold together is being brought into a very large place indeed. Breathe deeply, because this is a place of wide horizons.

Why do we respond by painting such minuscule pictures in our churches? Why are our prayer requests so much focused on personal pains and joys and so little on social needs, international developments and scientific discoveries? Are we still preaching the kingdom vision of God's claim on education, music and commerce?

Why do we respond by writing Christian books that focus mostly on individual spiritual growth?

Did I mention the mellow devotional music that inevitably plays in Christian bookstores? Please, the next time I visit such a store, will somebody put on a tape featuring the group Moxy Fruvous singing "My Baby Loves a Bunch of Authors" or the Montreal Symphony Orchestra playing Stravinsky's "Firebird"? I need to connect with the whole world He's got in his hands.

BW

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Fellow antidepressant Calvinarians, arise!

A Hamilton, Ont., pharmacist and psychiatrist wrote a helpful letter to the editor in one of Canada's major newspapers. He was critical of the paper's earlier unqualified promotion of Prozac as a "pep" pill. Prozac is an antidepressant drug prescribed for major depression and other psychiatric illnesses, warns the letter writer; it's not a pep pill. Besides, people should be alerted to possible side effects.

So far so good. But then he casually adds, "At risk of being a 'pharmacological Calvinist,' I would dissuade anyone from treating non-pathological mood fluctuations or personality traits" with Prozac.

Whoa! Hold on a predestined minute. A pharmacological Calvinist?

It sounds like the good doctor is using the word "Calvinist" as a synonym for wet blanket? nitpicker? pessimist? Ah, the injustice of it all. As a person who proudly considers himself 100 per cent depraved I deeply resemble that remark.

I'm reminded of a letter which Brian Stiller of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada sent to the managing editor of CBC radio news last October. In it Stiller protests the use of the word "fundamentalist" in a news broadcast to describe

evangelicals. "'Fundamentalism' is a code word, signifying people the media have judged to be less than legitimate, and view as having no place in the public main stream of our culture," wrote Stiller. And he urged the CBC to instruct its reporters and commentators that the "appropriate historic and contemporary word to describe those of evangelical Protestant faith is the word 'evangelical.'"

In a sense, Stiller's suggestion is a simple one. Just use the right word and we're happy. But how does one tell society that the word "Calvinist" is OK but that the meanings associated with the word are unfair, slanted, prejudicial?

Pharmacological Calvinist, Indeed! At risk of being a semantic shrink, I say, "Beware of the side effects of misrepresenting the most carefree, antidepressant and joyful religious group of all: Calvinists!"

I'm breaking out into the old Young Calvinist Federation song we used to sing in the '50s, with a glass of Koolaid raised high: "Calvinists are we, let our banners be, over land and sea, high unfurled."

BW

JANUARY 14, 1994

Politics/Letters



Across the Globe

David T. Koyzis

A heart patient in a foot race

Two years ago when I taught Soviet government and politics, the country we were studying was formally disbanded between the last day of classes and the final examination. Last semester, during my post-Soviet politics course, an earth-shaking Russian election occurred between the last class session and the exam. Indeed, the violence in October between Yeltsin and Parliament, followed so quickly by the election with its disturbing results, gave us an eerie sense of *deja vu* — that once more Russia's future is up for grabs.

The violence was, of course, the immediate consequence of President Yeltsin's decision to dissolve Parliament and call new elections. Here in Canada, the dissolution of Parliament would hardly be unusual, as we experienced only weeks earlier. But in Moscow it came as the culmination of some two years of worsening relations between the executive and legislative branches, whose respective powers were not clearly delineated in the much amended Soviet-era constitution.

Whither Yeltsin?

But if Yeltsin thought an election would give him a more co-operative parliament (now known as the Federal Assembly under the new constitution approved by voters the same day), he has been sorely disappointed. Moreover, the strong showing by the neo-fascist Liberal Democratic Party has suddenly thrust the name of its leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, into the spotlight. With the inaptly named Liberal Democrats holding many seats in the assembly, Yeltsin may be forced to tone down, or perhaps even reverse, his pro-Western stance.

Zhirinovskiy is a name we first heard in June 1991 when he came in third in the Russian presidential election. Since then I have suspected — and feared — that we would be hearing more from this unsavory character. An unrepentant imperialist, he believes not only that Russia should once more exist within the boundaries of the former Soviet Union, but that Finland, Poland, Iran and Alaska also rightfully belong to Russia. He is a racist and an anti-Semite, and he supports Yeltsin's new constitution because he intends one day to exercise its vast presidential powers himself.

What went wrong? In the first place, Yeltsin failed to throw his support behind the strongest pro-reform party, Russia's Choice. In the Russian political culture the tsar or president is perceived to be above partisan politics. To favor publicly one party over another would be an un-presidential act within this mindset. Even Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, in his *Rebuilding Russia*, proposed that, while political parties should be permitted to exist, they should be kept out of government. Without Yeltsin's support, sympathetic voters were forced to rely on their own judgment in selecting from among scores of fractious pro-democratic parties and independent candidates.

Reality impinges

In the second place, ordinary Russians have suffered under Yeltsin's reform program. While so-called "economic shock therapy" in the former communist countries may please Western financiers and the International Monetary Fund, a more gradual approach would make better political sense and, I would argue, be more just. An economy is not simply a machine, whose parts can be discarded and replaced as needed. It is made up of flesh-and-blood people who have to put bread on the table for themselves and their families. If they are unable to do so, many are likely to turn against the perceived architect of their miseries.

Much as one would not enter a recent heart patient in a foot race, a crippled economy like Russia's cannot simply be thrown open to the full force of global competition without doing grave injustice and reaping ominous political consequences.

David T. Koyzis tries valiantly to teach his political science courses at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont., despite their annoying tendency to turn into history courses in the middle of a semester.

Too much whiteness in coverage of racism conference

Isn't it ironic that *Christian Courier's* December 10 issue on racism included three articles that affirmed white identity?

The title of the front-page article established the overriding tenor of all the articles. Although the article "A 'nice bunch of racists' face each other" mentions Dr. Campayne's insight that "the source of racism in Canada is located in the privileges white people enjoy and don't want to share," its title suggests that white people need not feel disturbed by their privileged position in society, because they are basically a nice bunch of people anyway.

Saint and savior

You quote Dr. Campayne's insight again in your first editorial, Mr. Witvoet, where you write that "we who are North Americans cannot escape the charge of harboring racist attitudes as long as we cling to our privileged position and focus on examples of reverse racism (affirmative action)." But when you continue to reflect in a second editorial on your position as a white North American, you quickly identify yourself as a forgiven sinner, a saint, without addressing your privileged position at all.

In your editorial you also seemed to adopt a savior approach to combating racism. You asked, "What can we white people do to help 'our' native peoples? A more appropriate question might be, 'What privileges are we willing to do without, so that native people can take action themselves?'"

A missed opportunity

In the third article, "How a drumbeat caused offence," you related the story of Darrell Brertton, who confessed to reverse racism. I wondered why you, who are a white man, wrote about the personal experience of a native man, drawing upon the notes of Peter Slofstra, another white attendant? Why was Brertton not given space to tell his own story, just as Kingston prisoner Ron Dube is allowed to do from time to time on your pages?

You did your readers a disservice by relating Brertton's story third-hand (*It was a first-hand account of a public event, since I and many others were there and witnessed all of it except the little incident after the prayer circle.* Ed.)

We missed an opportunity to listen to a man whose personal experience with racism qualifies him to speak about the issue. If Brertton would have been allowed to speak for himself, he would at least have been able to explain why the Dakota rhythm caused offence, something that still seemed to elude you and Peter Slofstra. If an article by Brertton is not possible, a probing and sensitive

interview with him is the least your readers may expect.

Uncomfortable with ending

The concluding comment of "How a drumbeat caused offence" affirmed once again the white contribution to the conference. I felt strangely uncomfortable with your decision to conclude the article with a native man's apology to a white man. It focused my attention on the injustice of reverse racism, something you warned against in your first editorial, rather than exploring what factors contributed to Brertton's anger in the first place.

I appreciate that *Christian Courier* reported on the racial reconciliation conference, and that you showed us white readers the importance of confessing our racist attitudes. I hope that you will continue to challenge us to examine our positions of power in Canadian society and to discover where and how we may share that power.

Margaret Van Dyke
Edmonton, Alta.

Some concerns about barriers

Thank you, Bert, for using your skills to rouse a reader. In the Dec. 10 issue you have given prominent and in-depth coverage to the conference "Breaking down the barriers." Experience tells me that reconciliation between persons of different races is a scary subject for many of us.

You have underscored my response to the conference, and now I feel uneasy about three things among us.

Does not our pride about purity of doctrine alienate us from other Christians who seek Christ's way?

Has not our emphasis on our heritage blinded us to our present calling to share the best of it with those who did not come by our way?

Meanwhile, most of us can avoid even looking at the barriers. We don't have to test our deepest attitudes to "different" people until we face a person not as pale as we are — and listen! As sinners saved by God's grace.

Should the churches begin at home, inviting the personal testimonies of Canada's first peoples, and African Christians, and Latin American members of basic Christian communities, and refugees?

What do your readers think?

Arie Van Eek
Burlington, Ont.

(more letters on next page...)

Letters/Family

Scripture backs up Moore on cursed land

The article "Evangelical rancher ruffles Reformed feathers" (Dec. 17) radically differentiates between the "conservative evangelical leanings" of the spiritually minded John L. Moore and the "intellectual level" and "depth" that the Reformed prefer.

It is interesting that Moore is characterized as not having thought through many issues and that he is accused of mysticism. The evidence adduced is largely his view that you need to know Jesus as Savior to practise good stewardship, and

his view that his land would not produce because of a curse on it.

Is it true that the Reformed have difficulty believing that land can be cursed due to evil actions or sins committed there in previous generations?

Perhaps the intellectuals should check their Bible. Second Samuel 21 reveals just such a case that our "mystic" spoke of. There was a famine in the land for three successive years. David couldn't figure it out, so he inquired of the Lord. Turns out there was a curse on

the land because in a previous generation a king of Israel committed genocide there.

True, it was a kind of soil degradation: too much blood in it. But surely the soil was cursed because of sin. That had to be addressed. Once it was, the account tells us, "God answered prayer on behalf of the land."

I suspect this story in 2 Samuel is not well known because it does not easily mesh with intellectual depth.

How to decide that your land is cursed? It seems that Mr. Moore is onto something.

This biblical account proves that good farming methods are not enough to produce a good crop, and that God can withhold his blessing in many ways. The

Christian needs to go beyond studying agricultural technology.

The spiritual warfare mentioned in Ephesians is very real and too often underestimated. Perhaps we could do with a bit

more Bible study; then some of the mysteries will become more understandable. But not all things are fathomable by the intellect alone.

John Elgersma
Cayuga, Ont.

Passages that raise hackles and blood pressure

It is not my custom to comment on letters to the editor, but I hope you will make room for my response to David Feddes' critique of Adrian Helleman's review of Clarence Boomsma's book *Male and Female, One in Christ* (Dec. 17, 1993). Feddes criticizes what he calls "three badly frayed strands of argument."

The first one regards the status of women in Paul's days. According to Boomsma and Helleman, women in those days did not hold "positions of religious leadership." "Not so," writes Feddes. Women were often "priestesses and cultic leaders."

My response to Feddes is: Those priestesses were nothing but prostitutes used by men in "worship." The normal, married woman was never seen in public. She did not even eat with her husband when there were guests. The new film *Yentl* illustrates the traditional place of women very well.

That the gnostics emphasized "femaleness in deity" is a very common cultural phenomenon, but says nothing about the actual position of women. To declare that femininity is divine does not mean social justice for women. It's just one aspect of a male dominated religion.

Who knows Paul's mind?

Feddes also objects to the comparison of the status of women and slaves. Since 1 Corinthians 7 mentions that slaves should use the opportunity to obtain freedom, whenever possible, Feddes claims

that Paul should also have written that women, if they had a chance to teach or to have authority, should avail themselves of this opportunity.

Who are we to tell Paul what he should have written. Not every comparison has to be worked out in every conceivable detail. But Paul must have encouraged Priscilla to teach the learned Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18: 24-26). Most likely he encouraged other women as well.

Finally, Feddes does not accept Boomsma's argument that Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 2: 13-14 was based "on an interpretation that was current in that day." He accuses Boomsma of "flat denial of biblical inspiration and authority."

But every exegete will tell you that these verses are extremely difficult to explain. Thomas C. Oden writes: "This paragraph of Paul's letter to Timothy cannot be read without raising hackles and blood pressure." George W. Knight III (who is not in favor of women in office) gives in his 1992 commentary an interesting review of the many different "solutions" that have been proposed.

It is my impression from all commentaries I have looked at that most of the "orthodox" exegetes use a highly mystical or subtle interpretation to make the text "fit." Thus Boomsma's explanation may not be so bad after all.

Rem Kooistra
Waterloo, Ont.



Like the Lilies



Things are never what they seem

I don't know what made me think I had the time or talent to prepare a turkey for the high school staff and student dinner, but being in a generous mood I submitted my name and willingly. What's to cooking a turkey? You pop it into the oven and baste it every half hour. Then when your house starts to smell really good, you know it's ready.

Two days before the dinner someone from the school called: "Your turkey is here waiting for you." Why had I assumed someone would bring it to me?

I drove over to get the bird. It was huge — bigger than my bread box. It came with: a memorandum thanking me for graciously consenting to do what I was doing; a foil roasting pan; half a dozen eggs; a bunch of celery; a baggy of sage; a large onion; a recipe for stuffing a five-pound turkey; and instructions for roasting a 20-pound bird. This project seemed to instantly take on the dimensions of a high school math problem.

Off to a bad start

The next day, after chauffeuring Paul and Michelle to piano lessons and shopping for weekly groceries, I finally got around to the turkey. It was still partially frozen. As it creaked and cracked like a backyard ice rink I struggled to extract the neck and giblets.

I popped the stuffed turkey into the oven shortly after lunch. Then I immediately sped off to collect Angela and Alison for orthodontist appointments. We were only three minutes late. By the time I got back home, the bird was in need of serious basting.

Early that evening, at the five-hour mark, the suggested cooking time for a 20-pound bird, the house was smelling pretty good. I asked my husband Marty to lift the steaming brown-crust turkey out of the oven.

Now the hot bird was sitting in five centimetres of grease and it was time to leave for the grade school Christmas concert, which I wasn't about to miss. I left with a slight sense of anxiety.

When I got back to the turkey later in the evening, my first task was to scoop out soggy, greasy stuffing. I spent some time doctoring this with dry bread crumbs and flavored croutons. Almost satisfied with the stuffing, I then made gravy — an art I have never fully mastered.

Appearances are deceiving

By bedtime I was ready to slice the turkey. The first four slices looked good — delicate, white meat. After that a distressing pink tint appeared. I came to the realization that five hours did not cook this turkey.

I continued slicing. Then I threw everything into a roasting pan, covered it and shoved it back in the oven. By 1:30 in the morning my task was finally complete.

Several hours later Marty delivered Angela, the stuffing, gravy and sliced meat to school. Angela came home mid-afternoon muttering, "I couldn't even eat the stupid turkey."

"Why not?" I asked apprehensively envisioning trays of meat condemned by the banqueters — too pink, overcooked, inedible, too dry.

"Guess?" she said in that voice teenagers reserve for dimwitted parents.

I didn't want to guess. I braced myself for the worst. "Well, tell me."

"My teeth," she said. "I couldn't eat because of these stupid elastics the orthodontist put on my teeth."

I don't think she understood or appreciated my sigh of relief.

Marian den Boer is an associate with Write Impression, which specializes in communications and public relations. She lives with her husband and five children in Hamilton, Ont.

Media

Video review

American Friends

Stars Michael Palin, Natasha Richardson
Written by Michael Palin

You may never have heard of this film. It must have had a theatre run somewhere (in Britain, perhaps), but if it did I wasn't aware of it. I discovered it while rummaging around in my local video store; it was a pleasant discovery.

The video sleeve tries to attract viewers with this line: "If you liked *Howard's End* you'll love *American Friends*." Well, *American Friends* is no *Howard's End*, but nevertheless, it's an interesting, well-acted and beautifully photographed film, somewhat in the *Howard's End* genre. That is, it's a kind of English period piece/character study with English actors.

The film is set in England and Switzerland in the early part of our century. The main character is an Oxford don who aspires to the presidency of his college and who seems to have the position locked up. He is a man of integrity and is morally beyond reproach, if a rather stuffy character.

He is a bachelor only partly because he must be — at that time dons were not allowed to marry as, it was said, a wife and family would have interfered with their lives as scholars. And their lives as scholars were, for most of them, their whole lives. One suspects that *this* don is not at all sorry about the no-marriage rule. It's a convenient excuse for avoiding emotional intimacy.

A life-altering experience

This particular don takes a yearly holiday in Switzerland. But he always comes back the same. The beauty and tranquility of the place don't seem to affect him.

This year, however, he meets two American women who are traveling through Europe. The older woman is the guardian of the younger. The three go off exploring together when the pre-arranged tour of which the women had planned to be a part proves unpleasant.

The women and the don strike up a friendship of sorts and soon must go their respective ways. But, for the first time in his life, the don's emotional defenses have been penetrated and he finds himself thinking about them.

The three meet again when the women visit Oxford while more or less on their way back home. Without giving away the resolution of the plot, it can be said that eventually the don must make a decision which will permanently alter his life and affect his reputation as a scholar.

Actor Michael Palin seems to have been mainly responsible for this film; he wrote it and stars in it. And we find out in a written epilogue that the plot is based on the true story of a man named Palin at the turn of the century who did what the film's don does in the end.

Along with its technical excellence, there is enough emotional subtlety and plot unpredictability in this film to make for a satisfying evening of home entertainment.

African Christian media leaders pledge to fight human rights abuses

Richard Nyberg

HARARE, Zimbabwe (NNI)—African media professionals have vowed to maintain a critical and "prophetic" role in addressing human rights abuses on a continent where journalists and church leaders have been jailed for speaking their minds.

Meeting in the capital of Zimbabwe Dec. 5-10, more than 100 Christian media leaders pledged to provide "biblically based, informed and redemptive responses" to sociopolitical trends facing the continent.

In a conference policy statement released by the nine-year-old Fellowship of Christian Communicators in Africa and Madagascar (FOCCAM), leaders committed to "encourage the church's advocacy role as a voice for the voiceless, and to denounce human rights abuses regardless of who is the abuser or the victim."

The statement also resolved to support the church in its bid

to influence government policy and to promote the rights of women in media and society.

According to FOCCAM's outgoing general secretary, MacMillan Kiiru of Kenya, the church and Christian media have a "biblical mandate" to be actively involved in society.

"The Christian media should be the voice of the church to share the Scripture or the values of what the Christian faith is all about," he told NNI. "I believe we fail when we do not project the Christian media across all sectors of society," he said, adding that FOCCAM is prepared to support Christian communicators who are prosecuted and intimidated by disgruntled government officials.

Kiiru said Christian communicators—and the church as a whole—must overcome fear and self-censorship to promote biblical principles and justice.

Conference delegate Kweku

Hutchful, who trains church leaders, cautioned, however, that the church and its related media must speak with one voice.

"If governments start to perceive the Christian media as independent of the church, then there will be divide and rule," he asserted. "Then the government will deliberately pick up anything coming from Christian media, turn it around and say this is not the church speaking."

Hutchful also emphasized the need to avoid partisan alliances. The church and Christian communicators, he said, should analyze each issue from all angles and be balanced by denouncing wrongdoing whether it comes from the government, opposition, or other segments of society.

"When you speak, you point at the truth," he said, "and you let the knife cut wherever."

National Film Registry in U.S. saves films for posterity

Marian Van Til

Because films are so pervasive in our society, few of us think about the fact that, physically, they don't last forever. Heat, humidity, excessive light, and simply repeated showings will wear down or damage film, sometimes in just a few years. Colors will fade, and both picture and sound can become scratchy.

So to make sure that copies of good films will be preserved in a systematic way, the American Congress established the National Film Registry as part of the National Film Preservation Act which was passed in 1988. Since then, 25 films a year are placed in the registry.

"Films don't have to be old to be endangered," says Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, who selects which films will be added to the registry. And they don't have to be "classics" to be chosen for the registry.

Billington says the criterion is that "they are films that con-

tinue to have cultural, historical and aesthetic significance, and just as importantly, represent many other films deserving of recognition."

Among the 1993 additions to the registry are two films that each won five Oscars: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *It Happened One Night*.

Some of the other selections for 1993 were: *Chulas Fronteras* a 1976 film about life on the Mexico-Texas border; *Where Are My Children?*, a silent, 1916 film by female

director Lois Weber; *The Cheat*, also silent, and one of Cecil B. DeMille's early works (1915); *Inside Nazi Germany*, a 16-minute, 1938 newsreel; the 1943 classic *Lassie, Come Home*; and *The Godfather, Part II* (Part I is already in the registry).

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Church, Marian Van Til, page editor

New Russian Parliament could pose threat to religious liberty

Kim A. Lawton

WASHINGTON (NNI)—Russia analysts say the unexpected nationalist turn in the Dec. 12 parliamentary elections could bode ill for the future of religious freedom there.

Russian voters approved a new constitution with strong religious liberty provisions, but at the same time elected a significant number of politicians who may not be willing to enforce those provisions.

Because of the complicated political structure and slow vote-counting process, the final composition of Russia's first democratically elected Parliament is still not clear. But it is clear that ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's ironically titled Liberal Democratic Party did astonishingly well in the popular vote. The pro-Yeltsin, pro-reform Russia's Choice Party will be a substantial force in the Parliament, but also suffered some significant losses.

According to Voice of America's Victor Potapov, leading human rights and religious liberty advocate Gleb Yakunin lost his district race in the Ryazan region. However, at

press time, Potapov told NNI he was still optimistic that Yakunin could gain a parliamentary seat through the Russia's Choice slate.

Half of the seats in the 450-seat Duma are filled by candidates elected directly by district, and the other half are filled according to proportional party representation. In those seats, the political parties select their own slate of representatives and assign the seats based on the number of total votes the party received.

A member of the previous Parliament, Yakunin led the opposition in July and August to proposed legislation that would have severely restricted foreign missionaries and non-Orthodox religious minorities in Russia.

The newly approved constitution confers all basic rights related to the freedom of religion and conscience. It states that all religions in Russia are equal under the law and provides for no state religion. It also allows religious pacifists and other conscientious objectors to choose alternative service when drafted into the army.

However, according to Anatoly Pchelintsev, director

of the Institute on Religion and Law, "Having freedom of conscience in the constitution is one thing, but in practice, it's another."

Nationalism dangerous

Pchelintsev, who helped draft the constitution's religious liberty provisions, told NNI he fears nationalists and communists in the new Parliament will try to change the laws on religion. "They tried it last summer; they will try it again," he said. Pchelintsev added that he expects freedom for Protestants and other non-Orthodox churches to be hindered in the near future.

Pchelintsev, one of the first Russian Protestants to delve into politics, was unsuccessful in his own run for the Parliament. His Christian Democratic Party failed to get the number of signatures needed to be on the ballot.

Several Western analysts share Pchelintsev's concerns. "I think it's inevitable, really, that the issue of legislation restricting religion is going to arise again," concurred Russian Ministries' Anita Deyneka. "And I think it's quite likely

that Yeltsin, who was the barrier against that law being passed before, is going to have so much pressure from nationalists that he is going to have to make concessions to them."

One of those concessions, she added, could very well be a new law restricting Western missionaries and non-Russian Orthodox religions.

Zhirinovskiy has made many public statements decrying Western influence on Russian culture. Warns Mark Elliott, director of Wheaton College's Institute for East-West Christian Studies, "Zhirinovskiy's anti-foreign rhetoric has many dimensions, and the missionary dimension is one of them."

Potapov said he believes a new religion law may be put on the back-burner, at least for the near future. "I think, at least for the coming year, what we are going to see is more of a collision between Zhirinovskiy and Yeltsin," he asserted. However, he conceded that the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, "which also has radical right-wingers may try to attempt it."

According to Patrick Gray,

consultant for Russian Studies at the Washington-based Institute on Religion and Democracy, the combination of Orthodoxy and nationalism has historically been dangerous for other religious groups in Russia. "Under the reign of Nicholas I from 1825 to 1855, there was what was called the 'official nationality' which included Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality," he says.

"What we are seeing now comes from that; and any other religious body — Protestants, evangelicals, Catholics, Jews — is considered to be non-Russian and non-appropriate inside their borders," he asserts. He emphasizes, however, that not every Orthodox clergy and parish is pushing those views today.

Deyneka fears Russia is facing even more turbulent times. And in such a context, she said, "it becomes even more critical for Western religious groups [working in Russia] to show cross-cultural sensitivity" and to "emphasize partnership with nationals and the predominance of nationals."

Evangelicals and Catholics outgoing, says study

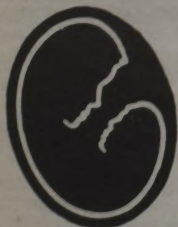
Marian Van Til

WATERLOO, Ont. — A study conducted by a professor of religion and culture at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University shows that both evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics tend to be extroverts, while Anglicans and other mainline Protestants tend to be "more intuitive and introverted than the general population" in Canada.

The United Church, how-

ever, posed a problem, "simply because it is United" and seems to contain a cross-section of personality types, says Dr. Christopher Ross, author of the study.

Ross used the Meyers-Briggs personality profiles to determine various personality types. The point of his study was to glean information that might be useful in helping to understand and resolve conflicts within churches.



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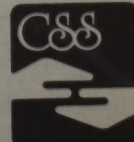
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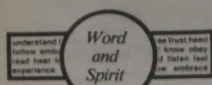
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Andrew Kuyvenhoven

Changing of the guard

Christmas is for children. Unless we accept the Gift with childlike wonder we miss out on the cosmic feast (see the Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-55).

Nevertheless, the climax of Luke's story is presented not by kids but by two old folks, Simeon and Anna. They have the Spirit-given insight into the real meaning of Jesus' birth. Therefore, it's remarkable that in nearly all Christmas presentations of our churches and Sunday schools these two people are missing. The angels, Mary, Joseph, the innkeeper, shepherds and magi have their role players. But where are the people who have the clue to the event?

Simeon and Anna represent the saints of Israel who are keeping watch. They cry to God, "How long?" Luke says Simeon "was waiting for the consolation of Israel" (2:25). And Anna spent her long life in fasting and prayer, waiting for the same event. Luke says that she and her friends "were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (2:28). Notice that both phrases, "the comfort of Israel" and "the redemption of Jerusalem," come from Isaiah 52:9.

Burst into songs of joy together/you ruins of Jerusalem/for the Lord has comforted his people/he has redeemed Jerusalem. But the similarity between the prophet Isaiah and the account of Luke is even more striking. The Old Testament prophet saw God coming to the weeping city of Jerusalem to dry her tears and set her free. And the first ones to see him would be the watchmen:

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices/together they shout for joy/When the Lord returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. (Isaiah 52:8).

Simeon is that watchman. His watch ends when the Lord comes to comfort his people. "Dismiss your servant!" he then says. That does not mean that he wants to die. And a sermon on euthanasia ("good dying") is not called for by the text.

Waiting for the Second Advent

There are at least two lessons here. First, the birth of the Messiah must be placed in the broad context of the restoration of Jerusalem and the regathering of Israel. That's not the stuff for the "millennium," as we're being told too often. But that prophecy is fulfilled with the coming of the Christ of God. He is the "light of revelation to the Gentiles and for the glory of (God's) people Israel" (Luke 2:32).

Secondly, the watch of the Old Testament saints has ended with the coming of the Lord. But today we still stand on guard. The true Israel, restored in Christ, yearns for the day of his return. "The Spirit and the bride say: Come." We wait until the tears will be wiped from the face of the bride. Then she will be radiant with joy, the new Jerusalem.

Most people don't even think of it anymore. But when Jesus came to Bethlehem people weren't really waiting either. Only Simeon did; and Anna and her friends. Nicodemus, also, "was waiting for the kingdom of God" (Luke 23:51); and Cleopas had been hoping that Jesus "was the one who was going to redeem Israel" (24:21). They were part of Israel within Israel.

And so, today some "saints their watch are keeping" and "their cry goes up: How long?"

Priest too evangelical

ATLANTA, Ga. (EP) — Greek Orthodox priest Eusebius Stephanou, whose evangelical style has placed him at odds with Orthodox tradition, was placed on temporary suspension last fall after appearing before a "spiritual court" convened by the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Atlanta. The court cites the priest's

"evangelistic philosophies" and his conducting of activities "foreign to the Orthodox Christian way of life." Stephanou, who emphasizes evangelism, personal growth, healing and group Bible study, told *Christianity Today* the trial was "a travesty of justice." He explained, "The attorney treated me like a common criminal.

They called me a religious phony, an imposter, a fraud who is exploiting people for financial gain." Stephanou said that even if his suspension is made permanent, it will have little effect on the efforts of his privately owned ministry to bring renewal to the Orthodox Church.

Violence by Muslim extremists takes toll on Coptic Christians

CAIRO, Egypt (NNI) — Egyptian police sources say at least two of six murders believed to have been committed by Muslim extremists between August and mid-November are due to a new tactic to eliminate Coptic activists accused of collaborating with government authorities.

The most recent rash of mur-

ders has raised the toll of Coptic killings to 36 since March 1992, or an average of at least one each month, mainly in and around the Upper Egypt city of Assyut.

The rising tide of murders is similar to an outbreak of anti-Coptic sentiments in October 1992, when Egyptian Muslim extremists assassinated 14

Christians, 10 of them in one day in the town of Tima.

At least 210 people have been killed, and another 510 wounded, since March 1992 in the confrontations between security forces and Muslim extremists committed to the overthrow of the Egyptian government in favor of an Islamic state.

While government favors Santeria, Protestant growth continues in Cuba

HAVANA (NNI) — The Ecumenical Council of Cuba recently experimented by placing 600 copies of the Bible for sale in a state-run bookstore. They were sold out in 40 minutes. A survey showed that only two of the buyers considered themselves Christian.

As the Cuban government relaxes its controls on religion, Protestants have seen a remarkable rise in interest. The Protestant seminary in Matanzas dropped to only a couple of students in the mid-1980s but today has 43, with others on the waiting list.

The Methodist church fell to only 3,000 members in the late 1960s, but today has at least 30,000 active members, and more attending.

Churches report that most of their new members are youths under 20. The churches have some older members and many young members, while the people in their 30s and 40s are not well represented.

There is an active house church movement in Cuba, but no one knows how large. After Castro gave permission for house churches to meet in December 1991, they expanded rapidly. In May of this year, however, the government

began asking house churches to register. The government will not register a church if the neighbors protest or if there is another church nearby.

Freedom of religion has also helped the growth of the Santeria movement. Santeria is an Afro-Cuban cult, using magic, fetishes, and animal sacrifice. The movement is courted by the Marxist government as a sign of national cul-

ture, and it was strengthened by the long presence of Cuban soldiers in Africa.

Today, the government allows Santeros (believers in Santeria) from Miami liberal entrance into the country, according to a Protestant official. The official complained the church had major difficulties getting visas for Christian foreign delegations.

Czech conflict over church possessions

PRAGUE (AFP) — In the precommunist era, the Catholic Church in the Czech Republic was a landowner and landlord. Communist rule ended that. Now the postcommunist government is reluctant to return all the properties to the church. The conflict is also causing cracks to appear in the coalition government of Premier Vaclav Klaus.

Except for the St. Vitus Cathedral in the central fortress of Prague, the government has returned all church buildings and chapels seized under the communist regime. It has also returned all the pastors' homes, hospitals, schools, and buildings used by the church's charitable services. When these buildings are used for their original purpose, the land around them will also be returned.

The conflict comes from other possessions used for income. The church used to own 170,000 ha. of forest, 5,000 ha. of agricultural land, and 3,400 other buildings. So far the government intends to return only some of these possessions.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Features

Moving the church from

maintenance

to

mission

The articles on the following two pages address a much-discussed and sometimes controversial topic among church leaders and members: church growth or "mission" versus church "maintenance." The articles were written independently of one another and take different positions on the issue. As a result, perhaps readers will want to begin a discussion on this important subject.

Henry Wildeboer

In our rapidly changing culture the church is striving to survive. For generations church life was predictable and dependable. Pastors were trained to do the ministry, and worship services were their responsibility. This has changed. Many within North American culture have been raised without influence of God and the church. Even those raised in church families are asking basic questions about whether they need the church.

What shall we do? Should churches carry on with "business as usual" or can we and our churches make changes to reach out to the North American mission field on our doorstep?

Kenneth Callahan in *Effective Church Leadership* writes: "New understandings of doing ministry must be created with each new generation for the church's mission to move forward. When an older generation imposes its understanding on the new generation — however innocently — both groupings become dysfunctional. Each generation must carve out an understanding of ministry that matches with its time" (3.4).

The world no longer comes to us

This has a profound effect on the leaders of the church, especially its ministers. It was commonly held that clergy would serve the church, laity would serve the world, and the world would come to the church. As long as the world came to the church for help in times of need, this system worked well. Now the world no longer looks to the church to find purpose and meaning in life.

Signs indicating this are obvious. Attendance in Canada's

mainline churches is declining by about one per cent per year; only about 27 per cent regularly attend church (regularly meaning twice a month). Growth among evangelicals, too, is minimal compared to other religions (Muslims, Hinduism, Sikhs, New Age; which are growing rapidly. Secularism is rampant; God exists but does not count. Reginald Bibby, in his recent book *Unknown Gods*, states that declining church membership will result in full-scale crises for most religious groups within 25 years. He adds, "It wouldn't be so serious if new religious groups could come in and fill the void, the way new businesses arise to give life to failing economies." I wonder what "groups" it will be that "fill the void"?

The familiar is comfortable

The Christian Reformed Church, like most churches, tends to function as it did when we lived in a church culture. We are hesitant to review our views, more reluctant to change our practices. Why? We tend to live with selective perception. Most of us associate with church people and often are not in tune with the rapid changes around us. The familiar and habitual is comfortable and dies hard. Many patterns are deep, and it is risky to make changes. The "maintenance church" has fewer changes and less turmoil than a mission church; it is easier to work with church people who are like us than to venture out to strangers who are very "different."

Dare we ask: "Are we living with a nostalgic concept of the church and the world?" And "For whom is our worship and ministry geared?" A preoccupation

with ministry to members can become a deceptive merry-go-round. Busy pastors and leaders feel very useful as they lead services, attend many meetings and visit numerous members without ever asking: "Is this really helping? Are we serving our greater community? Is God glorified by all this?" It takes courageous elders and ministers to ask these fundamental questions.

Many of our churches will continue for many years because they are wealthy and healthy enough to keep going. Yearly statistics however, indicate that many congregations are dying, if ever so slowly. Finally, when a church becomes so small as to need financial help, we ask hard questions about growth, outreach and community impact. Would the community miss the church if it closed its doors? At such a point some smaller churches resort to drastic measures because they have nothing to lose. Major surgery may kill the patient who is now too weak for radical change.

The church is in flux. Members' attitudes toward the church are also changing. Culture is shaping us.

Many Canadians regard the

church as ineffective and irrelevant. They use the church only for the rites of passage: baptisms, weddings, funerals ("hatch, match and dispatch"). In newer residential developments small plots of land are reserved for churches, often in areas away from the main thoroughfares of life.

The age of consumerism

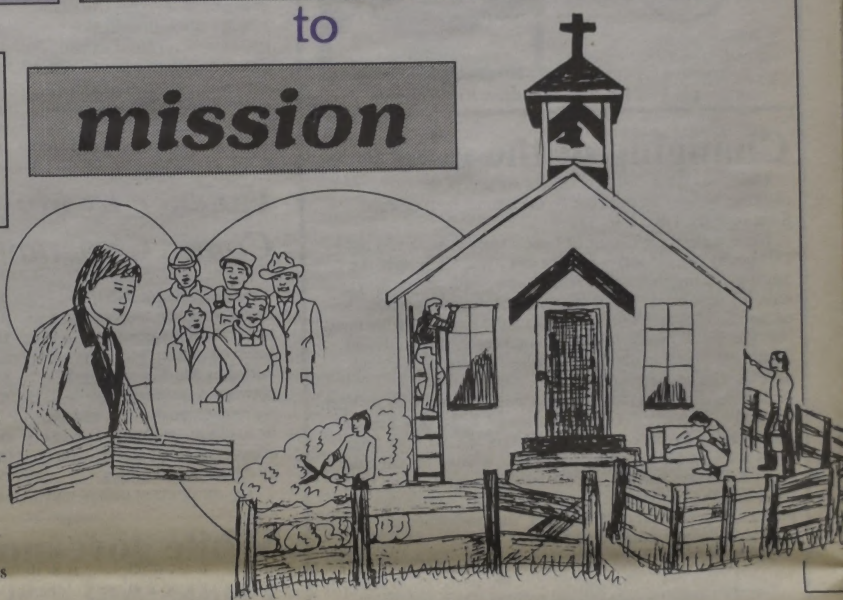
Among those raised in the church, the "expected loyalty" of the past is replaced with "earned loyalty." We change jobs, homes, schools, stores, banks — and churches. Denominational loyalty is weak and declining. The "boomer" generation distrusts institutions and is unattached to a church. That generation does not expect their hunger for spirituality to be met in traditional settings. They have been through the failure of communism, humanism and materialism, and have watched movements come and go.

Now what? Horoscopes, seances, New Age and "therapy" are answers to their searches for being in touch with the supernatural.

Denominationalism is replaced by consumerism. Crass as it may sound, they

ask: "Who offers product variety? Where are the bargains?" One dull service, a dirty nursery, an "unfriendly" experience and the consumer is gone. He or she looks for "full service" churches with top-notch programs and ministries for each age. Bibby says people can be won if churches "wake up to cultural realities and brush up their marketing skills." The 21st century will see a decline of the "franchise" churches and the growth of larger, independent, "no-name brand" new churches built around strong, gifted leadership. And Reformed Christians are joining this trend. We also see some of our younger pastors starting new churches because many older churches are inflexible.

There is a reshaping of the pastoral role. The pastor used to be the "educated," best-read respected leader in the community. That's gone. In smaller churches the minister still fulfills traditional tasks. Pastors in larger churches are shifting from pastor-shepherd to "leader-rancher" roles. As such they do more training, equipping and delegating and, if done well, provide better pastoral care than if they do so



Is 'maintenance or mission' a Reformed option?

John Bolt

Within the Christian Reformed Church today there is a heightened sense of mission. Local congregations are beginning to realize that North America itself is a mission field and that mission obligations are not fully met by generous offerings for foreign fields. The local church itself must be organized for mission.

This is all to the good. While the denominational world and home mission outreach of the Christian Reformed Church as a whole, and giving for it, have been unimpressive, more work on the local congregational level needs to be encouraged. Yet, there are some disquieting notes discernible in the chorus of those who sing about the "church as mission." A particularly insidious suggestion is the notion that a church which is not visibly and vigorously growing through outreach is less than a true church. When church growth becomes the

raison d'être for the church's existence one often hears disparaging remarks about some ministries which are "mere maintenance."

Sheep need feeding too

To begin with, it is neither charitable nor helpful to sneeringly dismiss a church ministry which, in obedience to and out of love for the Savior, faithfully baptizes and nurtures children, equips people to engage in deeds of diaconal mercy and healing, comforts the sick, the dying and the grieving, challenges and encourages God's people through biblically relevant preaching and worship, and consciously disciplines them to be faithful to their Lord in daily vocations—it is in fact sinful to label all this as "mere maintenance."

Stop to think about this for a moment. What is the purpose of mission, of evangelism? It is to be an obedient participant in Christ's mission which, according to the *Heidelberg*

Catechism, is to "gather, protect, and preserve for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith" (Lord's Day 21). The church, in this view, must be obedient both in gathering and nurturing. To attempt the latter without doing the former is to overlook the Great Commission's command to "go into all the world."

However, to disparage the latter in the name of enthusiasm for the former is to overlook the command to "make disciples." A Reformed and biblical view of the church leads us both to seek out lost sheep to enfold them and heeds Christ's call to "feed my sheep" within the fold.

Storm signals on the evangelical horizon

Apart from these more theoretical concerns about ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church), Reformed people should also be aware of storm signals on the horizon of the evangelical church-growth phenomenon. All is not well there. There is a growing body of literature among evangelicals themselves that expresses real concern about the accommodation of evangelism to modernist consumerism. In the words of one: *American evangelicals face growing spiritual and cultural trouble. We have forfeited our influence within American society and are on the verge of forfeiting the vestiges of our biblical identity.* (John Seel, *The Evangelical Forfeit: Can We Recover?* [Baker, 1993]:11.)

Others make similar points. Os Guinness (*Dining with the Devil: The Megachurch Flirts with Modernity* [1993]: 12) speaks of the "malling" of the church: "Modern megachurches have been built on the

philosophical and structural patterns of America's recent shopping malls... [those] 'cathedrals of consumption.'" In order to attract new "consumers" churches are told by "consultants" that they must become more "user friendly" or, in the current jargon, "seeker sensitive." Of course, such "offensive" topics as sin, conversion and holiness are then "downgraded." Even such practices essential to the Reformed faith as infant baptism are considered a stumbling block and therefore to be made optional.

In fairness of course, churches that are truly passionate for evangelism, biblically defined, will strive to avoid this trend. Yet, as Charles Colson (*The Body: Being Light in Darkness* [Word, 1992]) and David Wells (*No Place for Truth: or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* [Eerdmans, 1993]) have shown and argued, there is a growing trend in North American evangelicalism to accommodate the

direction. The irony is doublefold in that evangelicals such as Charles Colson are simultaneously discovering in the rich, full-orbed Reformed vision of Christian discipleship exactly what they contend is missing and sorely needed by evangelicals.

If correction is needed in the Reformed community in North America it is our failure to live out our own vision as fully, as consistently and as enthusiastically as we should. Our contribution to the evangelical world should be a vital, lived-out Reformed faith. We need to reconfirm our commitment to Christian education and Christian social witness at the same time that we work harder at reaching out evangelistically to our neighbours.

What I have written in this very brief article must therefore not be taken as an argument against mission or local congregational evangelistic activity. Of course not. Rather, it is to suggest some caution

"If correction is needed...It is our failure to live out our own vision."

faith to the pressures of marketplace consumerism. It may not be too strong to say, as John MacArthur, for example, does, that evangelicals are becoming "ashamed of the Gospel" (*Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* [Crossway, 1993]).

against an uncritical acceptance of certain current evangelical models of the church which are neither biblical nor Reformed. In particular, I want to plead "cease and desist" with respect to denigrating references to "maintenance ministry."

The cause of Christ and the advance of his mission is hindered, not helped, by such rhetoric. And faithful pastors should not be burdened with undue guilt if they haven't managed to create megachurch empires. In fact, in some cases, they may have avoided the tempter's snare.

John Bolt is professor of systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.

personally.

In his book *Dying for Change*, Leith Anderson describes the baby boomer's view of the minister. "Pastors are expected to be informed, articulate and charismatic. They are to be as attractive and well-groomed as the anchors on the network news, and they are expected to relate to the peculiarities of the community. They are to attract people, raise money and expand programs" (p. 54). Many of us do not want to fill such slots, even if we could.

Keeper of the aquarium?

In our congregations we also see a development of larger churches (especially in cities) with multiple staff and community ministries. As a pastor I was not prepared for much of this. I did not expect the church to grow significantly. I saw myself more as a "keeper of the aquarium" than a "fisher of men." My ministry has been colored more by denominational ex-

pectations, seminary training and colleague approval than the Great Commission. For me to change requires major new programming into my "main frame" computer system.

The role of the laity is also undergoing changes. The day of the pastor doing the ministry and the congregation passively "paying and praying" is over. They are eager to discover, develop and deploy gifts in meaningful ministries. Amazing dedication is shown in willingness to volunteer at great cost and sacrifice. Some retire early or take leaves-of-absence to do so.

There is a new evangelism. Door knocking is declining. Relationship/friendship, Bible study, cell groups and serving ministries are in. Christians modelling positive, joyful lives are contagious. Seventy-five per cent of the new people come to church because a family member or friend invited them. Coffee Break confirms this repeatedly. When they do come to worship, a relevant, dynamic service is a must.

Continued on p. 12...

Serious second thoughts

It would be ironic, therefore, to find Reformed churches and pastors moving away from their own tradition toward North American evangelicalism at the same time that evangelicalism is having serious second thoughts about its own

Moving towards mission

...continued from p. 11

How can the church become more mission oriented?

1. Revitalize the church's vision, hope and enthusiasm.

This means asking God to change our hearts with new sensitivity and perspective. It calls for fervent prayer, daring faith and bold obedience, starting with the leaders. For many, this requires a crying out to the Spirit of God to create in us a deep hunger for the touch of God that repents for self-centred living and moves to a renewed commitment to know God's word and do his works. Every church already has people praying, crying and longing for that, often in secret. They long for dynamic worship, more praise, participation in ministries and more honest, open fellowship.

2. Rethink what it is to be church.

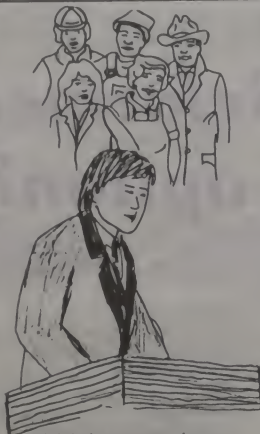
We need a vision and a philosophy of ministry. What does God call us to be? Does he want us to be a community church that reaches people with the love of Christ and grows as a consequence? If so, who is our primary target group to reach? What is our first task?

For us, to worship God dynamically is primary. Ministry to our people so that they can serve is next. This is followed by providing a support group for every member.

Who is most important? We listen carefully to the needs of the 15-22 year olds. Usually ministries that effectively reach them also reach our community visitors. Council must decide who is the primary target; the 15-year-old who may leave quietly out of boredom, or the 50-year-old who threatens to leave noisily because of changes? Once that is settled, I suggest council create a taskforce of visionary people and ask them to develop a vision and ministry statement for the next five years.

3. Refrain the leadership

We need leadership training



which helps pastors change from "professional ministers" to "missionaries" in our culture, from servants to servant-leaders, from shepherd-pastors who do the ministry to "ranchers" who train, delegate, encourage and help, from denominational franchise promoters to community leaders.

It calls for the development of gifts, and especially the gift of leadership in each congregation. It will require pastors who, besides being grounded in the Word and Spirit, are also relational, good communicators, flexible, entrepreneurs and risk-takers. Is there room for trial, error, risk-taking and even failure? If not, we are condemned to keep doing the same things. If we do what we've always done, we'll get what we've always gotten!

This calls for leaders who are aware that they will suffer for godly obedience. The church needs men and women willing to pay the price and who expect it so that when opposition and vicious attacks come their way they are not blown out of the water with shock and surprise. Fear of criticism and tension leads to a "no-charge" church. We must face it!

4. Restructure the church's

ministry.

Once a vision for outreach and growth is part of the church's thinking, changes need to be implemented so that it can happen. Many consistories were structured for smaller churches and as the church grew they became larger but more inefficient. Decisions that could better be made by a board of 6-8 are made by councils of 20 or 30 people often because we do not trust a smaller group to make decisions.

I would suggest dividing a council into three groups according to gifts.

1. A "board" consisting of 6-8 people with leadership and administrative gifts who basically direct the life of the congregation.

2. Pastoral care elders who do the shepherding, caring and counselling, (including all discipline).

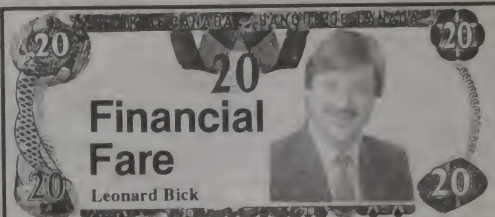
3. Deacons who have the gifts of helping and mercy, and who lead the church in ministries within the congregation and community.

Along with this structure, my church assigns committees (task forces) with clear mandates and the freedom to work creatively. We ask for regular written reports to the board. Those reports include with items for information and recommendations for action.

Since using this structure the workload and meeting time for all has been greatly diminished. It does require trust and good communication. Where that is absent, it will not work well.

We live in exciting times. The gospel is the same. Communicating it effectively so that it shapes the lives of members and visitors is a constantly fresh challenge. The Lord has promised to build his church. He's faithful to his promise and continues to do it through the guidance and the empowerment of his Spirit. We are to be alert to the spirits of this age and confront them with the Word and Spirit of God in us and through us. God provides courage to be daringly obedient and bold. He gives grace when we fail. With him we cannot lose!

Rev. Henry Wildeboer is pastor of Zion Christian Reformed Church, Oshawa, Ont.



Financial Fare

Leonard Bick

Start early on RRSP

It's the New Year and time to consider RRSP investing. Here are some interesting considerations for 1994. Most of the RRSP consideration apply to the RRIF as well.

In recent years the level of foreign content allowed in your RRSP has increased from 10 per cent to 20 per cent. International investing is more than an opportunity; it is virtually a necessity for attaining the best performance and highest return on investment.

In addition to the 20 per cent provision generally permitted, there are several new RRSP investments that have been designed to result in 100 per cent foreign content for your RRSP.

Foreign or Global investing also improves performance in two ways. Higher returns and lower risk. The world stock market capitalization index has outperformed the Toronto Stock Exchange 300 index by an average of 3.3 per cent per year over the last 20 years. By adding foreign exposure to a portfolio, risk is lowered. In fact, further analysis shows that by adding 30 per cent foreign content to a Canadian portfolio, risk is reduced by 10 per cent.

Doubling your tax savings from your RRSP this year

The Working Ventures Canadian Fund is now in its fourth year. This fund is set up to invest in smaller Canadian companies that have high growth potential. Individual investors that invest up to \$5,000 will receive not only the tax savings resulting from the RRSP contribution but also \$2,000 worth of tax credits. For many investors, this means more than \$4,000 of tax savings for \$5,000 invested. If you are in the highest tax bracket your total tax savings are more than \$4,500 on \$5,000 invested. The investment itself can reasonably expect to outperform bank and trust GIC's as well. This will be very popular in 1994.

Higher interest rates for the very conservative investor

A number of money managers have introduced government income funds. One example is the Trimark Government Income Fund. This is perfect for the conservative investor who wishes to do better than Guaranteed Investment Certificates without taking extra risk. If you buy a GIC for five years today, the annual interest will likely compound at a rate that was stated at the outset. The government income fund mentioned above reinvests the bond interest into new bonds at the time. This means that if interest rates rise, this fund will benefit. If you believe that interest rates are pretty much at a low point and you are very conservative, then this fund is for you.

Make your contribution early and look around

Plan to make this year's RRSP contribution as early as you can. This will mean quicker tax receipts and the investment will begin to grow sooner. If you have any other RRSP's that are maturing evaluate alternatives. If you are dealing with an institution that has only a short list of alternatives, look around. Independent investment dealers will have more than 500 choices when it comes to RRSP investments. It stands to reason that with this many choices, the best opportunities are more likely to be available.

Leonard Bick is an Ancaster, Ont., based financial planner.

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Meditation/Books

Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer



The power to see it through

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him" (James 1:12).

Helen Steiner Rice penned a poem that fits the new year. She said: *I see the dew glisten as a new day is born/And I hear the birds sing on the wings of the morn/As God wraps up the night and tucks it away/And hands out the sun to herald a new day—/A day yet unblemished by what's gone before./A chance to begin and start over once more.*

A new year is ahead of us, with all its energies and possibilities. When Winston Churchill was 75 years old he had a photographer come in and capture his mug on film. The photographer was quite excited about this opportunity. After it was all finished, he attempted to pay Sir Churchill a compliment "I hope," he said, "that I will be able to shoot your picture on your hundredth birthday as well!"

Churchill looked him up and down, scowled a bit, and said, "I don't see why not, young man! You look reasonably fit and healthy!"

We should all be so positive about our futures. But too well we know how the days and months ahead will sap from us what Harry Emerson Fosdick called "the power to see it through." Remember the way that Edna St. Vincent Millay put it? She sorrowed at the small heart with limited capacities: *The world stands out on either side/No wider than the heart is wide:/Above the world is stretched the sky/No higher than the soul is high./The heart can push the sea and land/Farther away on either hand:/The soul can split the sky in two./And let the face of God shine through./But East and West will pinch the heart/That cannot keep them pushed apart:/And he whose soul is flat—the sky/Will cave in on him by and by.*

What broadens and deepens and empowers a soul, giving it "the power to see it through"? I remember finding an answer to that question in a marvellous way, years ago, when a friend introduced me to Abraham Joshua Heschel, the great mystic of modern Judaism. For hours I sat in the library at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, poring over his sensitive inspiration.

Sabbath interludes

Heschel said, "In the tempestuous ocean of time and toil there are islands of stillness where a man may enter a harbor and reclaim his dignity."

Yes! But where do you find those islands? Heschel went on, "The sabbath is the island, the port, the place of detachment from the practical and attachment to the spirit." He pictured us in mad motion: "Rushing hither and thither time becomes soiled and degraded." But "...the sabbath is the opportunity to cleanse time."

Worship is the harbor of the soul, finding its bearings once again in a sea of lost horizons and wintry winds. The record of one who has "the power to see it through" is most likely written with frequent commas, where a scanning of the heavens restored a sense of purpose and direction.

Nancy Henigbaum set the thought to music in her song for all who have ever felt the pavement pound beneath their runners: *When he runs he never wearies, when he walks he never faints:/He is striving for the Master, and cheered on by the saints./Earthly runners may be healthy, but a better race is on:/Won't you come and join the runners' Maranatha Marathon?*

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

To be a Jewish child in Nazi Europe

Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust, by André Stein. Toronto: Viking, 1993. ISBN 0-670-84518-3. Hardcover, 224 pp., \$27.99. Reviewed by Robert VanderVennen.

When Ada Moscoviter and her mother stepped off the streetcar in Amsterdam in 1942, German soldiers surrounded her mother and took her away. Six year-old Ada, who that day had neglected to wear her yellow star, walked away and never saw her mother again. At home she said, "The Germans took Mommy." She felt guilty.

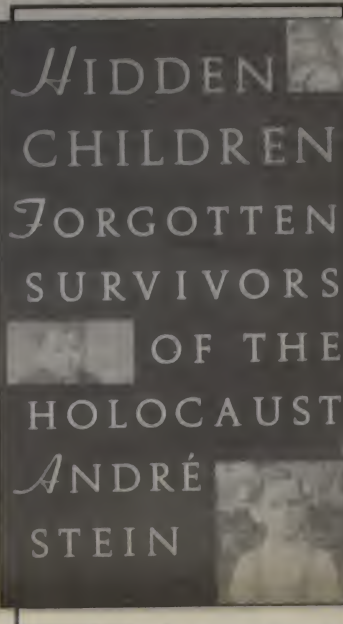
Shortly afterward, Ada's father decided that the only way for him and his three children to survive was to hide, all four of them in separate places. Ada was hidden with a loving family in Leerdam. From then until Liberation, she couldn't go outside again.

Three months after Liberation a strange old man came and said he was her father. She couldn't connect him to her earlier life and wouldn't leave with him. Finally, the three children, including her younger brother, now a fervent Catholic, were taken to live for 18 months with the Hamstras, a Christian family in Luth. When their father remarried, the children reluctantly lived together in his house. At age 21 Ada immigrated to Toronto.

Illegal to be a Jewish child

When the Nazis ruled most of Europe it was illegal to be a Jewish child under the age of 16. All those the Nazis could find were killed. Some hidden ones they couldn't find. All Jewish children who survived World War II in Europe were hidden.

What was hiding like for these children, and what kinds of lives did they have when the war was over? We hardly know because their stories have rarely been told. Adults have not believed the children—they were "just children" and couldn't be counted on to have good memories, so it was said. Many adults did not themselves have the emotional stability to hear the children's stories. Adults believed that hidden children didn't want to tell their stories. Many of them didn't, and have never told



them.

André Stein, a professor at the University of Toronto, was himself a hidden Jewish child in Budapest. His earlier book, *Quiet Heroes: True Stories of the Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Holland* carried the voices of Dutch Christians who hid Jews. This new book tells the stories of the children of 10 families, including his own, who were hidden during Nazi rule. He interviewed the children-survivors, all of whom had immigrated to North America.

All of the children continued to hide in certain ways after the Liberation, and for the rest of their lives. Abandonment and inability to trust others became major motifs in their lives. It has always been hard for them to reveal themselves, to open up. It was both impossible and necessary to trust the future, says Stein.

Many live powerful lives

Yet these hidden children often live powerful lives dedicated to serving and helping others. They often have a sense of mission, of being saved for a purpose. This exists along with a feeling of guilt for being saved while most of their family members may have died.

Jewish children needed to be

hidden all over Europe. Stein tells the stories of children hidden in the Netherlands, France, Hungary, Poland and Lithuania. One young person survived the Nazis only to be shipped off by Russians to a forced labor camp in Siberia, for no apparent reason. Anti-Semitism was a vicious disease that bore a bitter fruit.

Many of these children were hidden with Christian families. They needed to become silent and invisible. To blend with the family they needed to become like Christians, Protestant or Catholic. It was hard to keep believing in the

God of Israel. Many lost their faith in God altogether. After the war it was terribly hard for many of these children to be reunited with whatever fragments of their families were left, since it was deadly dangerous—in the experience of their young lives—to have anything to do with Jews and Jewishness. Many of the children were exploited by the families who took them in. At the age of five or six they needed to become shrewd, wise, suspicious, and skilful at surviving.

These survivors often couldn't develop intimacy with their own children. So they have been somewhat aloof, as their parents had to be toward them. They were left cynical about human relationships.

Stein tells the stories of these hidden children graphically but without overstatement. He adds enough interpretive insight so that we can feel for the plight of these hidden children and their later lives.

I found this a powerful book. It should be read, not the least, by the children of those who endured the war in Europe. Maybe even some survivors will find the book therapeutic and helpful.

News/Advice

Mennonite agency ranked one of the top charities in U.S.

AKRON, Pa. (MCC) — Money magazine has ranked Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) the fifth best relief and development agency in the United States in 1993 — up from 12th last year.

Charities getting high grades from the magazine are those that "wring maximum values from contributions."

The jump from 12th to fifth reflects changes in the way Money magazine puts its data together rather than any change in MCC's efficiency.

In the past the magazine

used one-year statistics. This year they judged organizations "on their long-term efficiency — that is, the average percentage of income spent on programs over the past three years."

In the relief and development category, MCC is listed as spending 90 per cent of its income on programs. Top-ranked MAP International, a program that sends medical supplies abroad and does some development, spent 95 per cent of its income on programs.

Redeemer College plans Dooyeweerd Centre

ANCASTER, Ont. (RC) — Redeemer College has announced it will open a "Dooyeweerd Centre," a research centre dedicated to the study of neo-Calvinist philosophy in September 1994.

The centre will focus on the "translation, dissemination and ongoing study of the writings of the Dutch neo-Calvinist philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd," says the college. Additional study will be devoted to other neo-Calvinists whose thought is related to Dooyeweerd's.

Dooyeweerd maintained that all thought is influenced by religious presuppositions, and that there is no barrier between the rational and the spiritual. As such, his philosophy "repre-

sents a fundamental challenge to the intellectual mainstream of Western thought." By furthering and developing this perspective and making its major publications available in English, Redeemer College believes the centre "has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the furtherance of Christian scholarship in North America and in other areas of the world, where an interest in Dooyeweerd's thought is increasing."

The college is actively seeking a director for the centre and will announce an appointment soon. The person filling this position will also be a member of the faculty of the college.

Maranatha Homes Burlington, Ont.

This award-winning Senior Citizen Home is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation. Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income. Maximum \$435.00 a month.

Information from

Mrs. Henriette Hofsink, 109-3260 New St.
Burlington, ON L7L 3L4 (905) 681-0311

Peter and Marja are



Dear P & M:

I always appreciate your thoughtful answers which you give in your column. This also counts for the one in the Nov. 19, 1993, issue regarding the sabbath/Sunday. I did wonder, however, why you made no mention of the fourth commandment which the Lord himself gave. I've always felt it of great importance to adhere to this commandment because God used so many words to describe it. Do you think that God did this on purpose to underscore its importance?

Dear Sunday Observer:

We didn't mention the fourth commandment in our column on Sunday rest because we assumed it. Our approach was to work out the implications of that commandment for New Testament believers.

We agree that this is an important commandment, but not because it uses more words than the others. Sabbath observance, like the sign of circumcision, identified those with whom God had made his covenant. Its main characteristic was rest. The marvelous thing about this rest is that it was extended to the whole household, including the animals and the "alien within your gates." This commandment needed a few more words so that God's rest was clearly understood to apply to all creatures, not just a favored few.

Isn't it interesting that this commandment does not include one word about worship or how we are to rest? It says only that we are to keep the Sabbath day holy. In fact, the Old Testament has very little to say about what the Israelites could or could not do on the Sabbath. Jeremiah 17 forbids carrying loads on the Sabbath, but that's about it.

On the basis of that passage the Pharisees made hundreds of rules about sabbath behavior. Remarkably, the Bible itself gives us very little to go on, except for the fact that we honor and image the Creator when we rest one day out of seven.

Dear P & M:

As part of a home support program I make a weekly visit to a lady whom I'll call Freda. She is in her early 70s, is homebound and quite deaf. She does most of the talking, which is fine with me.

Last winter she asked me to help her with reading the Bible since she doesn't understand it. Together we went through a "Coffee Break" booklet but it didn't go very well. When she tried to answer the questions she

would not stick to the Bible but would only express her own opinions. There is no way we can have a discussion about a Bible passage because she thinks she knows it all!

I am further frustrated by the fact that she doesn't understand me very well. She is Roman Catholic and I am Christian Reformed and I can tell she doesn't understand much that's in the Bible at all. She has several versions of the Bible but has them around the house as relics, not copies to read.

I want so much to help her but I find it so hard. She doesn't go to church anymore because of her health, but she is quite cheerful most of the time and does a lot of handicrafts. Could you suggest a way that would help us study the Bible?

Dear Bible Students:

We wonder whether the "Coffee Break" booklet is getting in the way. It might work better if you simply read a Bible book together. Break it down to small, manageable chunks for each visit and let her freely express her questions and opinions in response to what you read together.

For example, read a psalm and stop after each verse or section and ask what she got out of it and what the Lord is saying to both of you. During the season of Lent, use those weeks to read the chapters that describe the arrest, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. During Advent read everything there is in the Bible leading up to the birth of Christ.

Use of the daily lectionary would be a helpful and systematic way to cover main biblical themes over a period of time; and with its daily psalm, Old and New Testament lesson and Gospel lesson, it's an approach with which she will be familiar.

Or you could read the story of Ruth or Daniel in the Lion's Den, or whatever. In other words, avoid discussions about the Bible that get bogged down on the correct ways of interpreting and understanding the Bible and concentrate on an approach that lets you simply enjoy and reflect on the Word of God in a childlike way.

You may be far more familiar with the Bible than she, but don't forget that without realizing it you could be using Reformed "jargon" in explaining the Bible just as she comes at it in a way that is foreign to you.

Don't overlook the power of prayer. Before each visit ask the Lord to make things easy and clear. During your visit, say a short prayer with her and ask the Lord to speak to both of your situations.

Keep it goodnatured and simple. Lower your expectations of yourself and of her. Remember that Jesus said that the Kingdom belongs to those who believe like little children.

Write to: P & M

c/o Christian Courier

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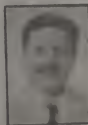
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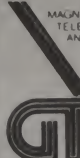
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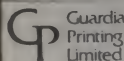
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	WINTER: With thanks to the Lord, James and Anne (Van Duyn) announce the safe arrival of their son, STUART JAMES on Dec. 30, 1993. A brother to Christina and Simon. Eleventh grandchild for Arnold and Helen Winter of Bradford, Ont., and fifth grandchild for Willem and Christina Van Duyn of Mississauga, Ont. Home address: 124 Glenway Circle, Newmarket, ON L3Y 7S2		Congratulations to Luit and Fre Miedema on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!	
	Birthdays DEN HAAN: With thanksgiving to God for Dad's love, example and life we will celebrate the 90th birthday of ADRIANUS DEN HAAN on Jan. 15, 1994. The celebration (an open house) will be held at the Alliston Chr. Ref. Church, 26 Downey Ave., Alliston, Ont., on Jan. 15, from 2-4 p.m. Children and families are Gerit & Susan den Haan — Alliston, Ont. Albert, Robert, Joan, Dan Sam & Bonnie den Haan — Yellowknife, NWT Joel & Janet (Eric), Christina & Ted (france) Ed & Wilene den Haan — Guelph, Ont. David & Connie, Mike & Chrsty, Stephanie, Deborah Marjorie & Sam Miedema — Alliston, Ont. Wayne & Judy, Adrian, Gary, Brian Derek Martin & Berta den Haan — Victoria, B.C. Elena, Christopher John & Bonnie den Haan — Alliston, Ont. Scott, Andrew, Manenne Emily Address: 301 Victoria St., East, Alliston, ON L9R 1K4	Birthdays KALVERDA: MEINDERT KALVERDA will be celebrating, D.V., his 80th birthday with his children, grandchildren, friends and relatives at an open house in his honor on Saturday, Jan. 29, 1994. Please join us in fun, fellowship and thankfulness to the Lord at Trillium Village, 400 Dominion Street, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8, from 2-4 p.m.	Anniversaries 1954 January 30 1994 "Great is thy faithfulness." JAN and NELLIE VAN DE GRAAF (nee VAN DEN HERIK) hope to celebrate, through the grace of our heavenly Father, our 40th wedding anniversary with our children. Hetty & Ray Peter Elly & Harry Nick & Christine (fiancee) and grandchildren: Connie, Jeremy, Arjan and Kann Home address: 3175 Kirwin Ave., #167, Mississauga, ON L5A 3M4	Marriages BUIST-BONTIUS: JANTINA and JOHANNES are delighted to announce their coming marriage to each other on Jan. 15, 1994, at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church in the town of York, Ont., with Pastor John Postuma officiating. The ceremony will be at 3 p.m., D.V., with standing reception following. Future address: 14 Muncey Ave., Rexdale, ON M9W 3W1. Tel.: (416) 747-8496.
Adoption  HOEKSTRA: Rick and Eileen (nee Middeldijns) praise God for His continuing faithfulness. LAUREN RACHELLE was born on Nov. 5, 1993, and this second gift has been lovingly adored by big sister Lindsay since coming home. Fourth grandchild for John and Margaret Middeldijns. Sixteenth grandchild for Bill and Betty Hoekstra.			Teachers AYLMER, Ont.: The board of Immanuel Chr. School is inviting applications for a full-time administrative/teaching position (60%-40%), beginning August 1994. Administrative experience is required. Please send application and resume to: John Kriens-Lokker, chairman Immanuel Chr. School 75 Caverly Road Aylmer, ON N5H 2P6 All applications must be received by Jan. 15, 1994.	

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Teachers	Obituaries	Obituaries	Obituaries	Obituaries
<p>COBOURG, Ont.: Northumberland Chr. School. We have a possible opening for a part-time educational assistant in the junior classroom (Grades 3-5). Please send resume and your letter of application, including your reasons why you would like to work at Northumberland Chr. School, to:</p> <p>Henry Lise Northumberland Chr. School R.R. #5 Cobourg, ON K9A 4J8</p>	<p>"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust" (Ps. 91:2). The Lord took unto himself ADRIANNA MARIA ALGERA loving wife of Sye Algera, our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother on Dec. 18, 1993, in her 77th year. Lovingly remembered by: Dirk & Dianne — Port Hope, Ont. John & Alice — Winnipeg, Man. Riender & Norah Baarda — Caledonia, Ont. Robert & Phyllis — Hamilton, Ont. Gary & Cathy Joritsma — Vineland, Ont. Carl & Pat — Waterdown, Ont. Andrew & Karen — Hamilton, Ont. and 22 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Funeral service was held Dec. 21, 1993, at Immanuel Chr. Ref. Church, Mohawk Rd., Hamilton, Ont., Rev. John Zantigh officiating.</p> <p>On Dec. 9, 1993, the Lord took home our dear wife, mother and grandmother, TERRIE BAARDA (nee WYMA) at the age of 52. Survived by her loving family: Husband: Chester Baarda — Langley, B.C. Children: Marilyn & Cliff Vanderploeg — Kitchener, Ont. Alyssa, Jared Brian & Monica Baarda — MacKenzie, B.C. Sandra & John Venema — Abbotsford, B.C. Nancy Baarda — Abbotsford, B.C. Kevin Baarda — Langley, B.C. Also survived by two sisters and two brothers. Correspondence address: 4641-202 Street, Langley, BC V3A 5J2</p> <p>On Dec. 17, 1993, the Lord quite suddenly took home to eternal glory his child, GARY BOS at the age of 62. Loving husband of Rose-Marie Bos (nee Rogmans) and dear father of Cecily. He will also be lovingly remembered by his brothers and sisters: Janet & George Rhodes — Mississauga Bert & Janette Bos — Cambridge Betty & Walter Deen — Drayton Frances Rozendal — Hamilton Sharon & Tom VanMilligen — Bridgewater, N.S. Bertha & John Drost — Drayton William Bos — London, Ont. Everett Bos — St. Catharines Clarence & Ingrid Bos — Clinton Christine & Paul Porter — Ottawa and many nieces and nephews. Correspondence address: 48 Park Drive, Woodbridge, ON L4L 1A8</p>	<p>"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes." On Dec. 22, 1993, our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, HELENA JACOBA MARIA GRÜTER (nee VANDERBRUGGE) was called home to begin the eternal celebration at the age of 85. Lovingly remembered by: Irene & John Van Hoffen — Grimsby, Ont. Anita, Glenn, Mona, Bruce, Tim, Douglas, Charles Ineke & Tony Tol — Grootebroek, the Neth. Marion, Ian, Renata Rudy & Maria Grüter — Vancouver, B.C. Karl Erk & Carla Grüter — Winnipeg, Man. Tammy, Robert Predeceased by her husband Willem in 1977. The funeral took place on Dec. 29, 1993, Pastor Bishop officiating.</p> <p>Oudega, (Small) Clinton, Ont. March 20, 1921 - Dec. 12, 1993 "She who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91:1). The Lord in His wisdom took suddenly unto Himself, sparing her from a lot of suffering, our dear beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, ANNA VANDERWAL (nee HOUTMAN) Loved, missed, and remembered by her husband Melle. Mother of: Greta & John Eelkema — St. Thomas, Ont. Jeff & Engela, Bradley & Jennefer John & Colleen VanderWal — Queen Charlotte, B.C. Mel, Sandra, Wade Grace & Andy DePutter — Bayfield, Ont. Lisa, Kim & Joseph, Andy Henny & Steve Zylstra — Stratford, Ont. Andy & Caroline, Cindy & Michael, Charlene Veenstra, Shawn & Brian Harry VanderWal — Victoria, B.C. The funeral service was held at the Clinton Chr. Ref. Church, on Dec. 15, 1993, at 2 p.m., Rev. Dirk Miedema officiating. Correspondence address: Mel VanderWal, R.R. 3, Clinton, ON N0M 1L0</p>	<p><i>Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, help me stand, I am tired, I am weak, I am worn, Take my hand precious Lord, lead me Home.</i> The Lord promoted to glory at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont., on Dec. 26, 1993, his child, NEELTJE LOOYEN (nee RIETDIJK) in her 86th year. Loved mother of: Elly & Roland Hoogendoorn — Westbrook, Ont. Pieter & Buelah Looyen — Kingston, Ont. Nelly & Andrew Vandertol — Calgary, Alta. She will be remembered by eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Predeceased by her husband Leendert Looyen (1983) as well as her six brothers in the Netherlands. A graveside service took place on Dec. 30, 1993, at Pleasantview Memorial Gardens, Fonthill, Ont. Following interment a memorial service was held at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont., Revs. P. de Bruyne and C.R. Hoogendoorn officiating. Correspondence address: Mrs. Elly Hoogendoorn, 1428 Heath St., Westbrook, ON K0H 2X0</p> <p>The Lord called to his eternal home our beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, MARTHA VAN ROOYEN (TIMMER) in her 88th year on Saturday, Dec. 18, 1993, in Chatham, Ont. Beloved wife of Dirk Van Rooyen for 64 years. Predeceased by her daughter Aletta (infant) and son Wiegert. Dear mother of: Henk & Gonnie Van Rooyen — Beamsville Dina & Simon Dreise — Chatham Martin & Grace Van Rooyen — Forest Adrian & Margaret Van Rooyen — London Alice & Bert Schreiber — Ottawa Martha & Albert Luth — Dresden Dick & Liz Van Rooyen — Forest William & Margaret Van Rooyen — Ripley Bert & Tinie Van Rooyen — Forest Francis & Connie Van Rooyen — Woodstock Dear mother-in-law of Hilkie VanderHeide, Mitchell, Ont. Survived by 53 grandchildren and 78 great-grandchildren. The funeral service was held on Tuesday, Dec. 21, 1993, in the First Chr. Ref. Church, Chatham, Ont., with Rev. W. Postman officiating. Interment in Maple Leaf Cemetery, Chatham, Ont. Correspondence address: Mr. Dirk Van Rooyen, 122-40 Elm Street, Chatham, ON N7M 6A5</p>	<p>June 18, 1905 - Dec. 17, 1993 The Lord took home our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, HARMKE JANTINA STERINGA (BUIITER) Predeceased by her loving husband Pieter. Her children: Jake & Eda Steringa — Brampton, Ont. Andy & Grace Steringa — Georgetown, Ont. Pete & Jennie Steringa — Clive, Alta. Mieke & Tim Buisman — Brampton, Ont. Debbie & Herb Armitage — De Winton, Alta. John Steringa — Brampton, Ont. Emily & Roger Kelly — Hollywood, Fla. Jerry & Janet Steringa — Georgetown, Ont. 26 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. Romans 8:24a. Correspondence address: M. Buisman, 30 Marsden Cres., Brampton, ON L6W 2X1</p> <p>1923 - 1993 Jesus has seth me free On the cross of Calvary, Now I go to my Father's home, And sing and hie before His Throne. PATRICIA HIEMSTRA (HOVIUS) was called home on Dec. 28, 1993, to the place the Lord prepared for her. Brothers and sisters: Yvonne Wieringa Jake & Kay Hovius Bob & Ninka Hovius Henk & Janet Sleiger Tim & Denise Stortebloom Derk & Anita Hovius nieces and nephews. Correspondence address: Box 542, Bradford, ON L3Z 2B1</p>
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<p>Graduation</p> <p>WILLOUGHBY:</p>  <p>Ralph and Jennie Numan are proud to announce the graduation of their daughter, TEENA WILLOUGHBY from the University of Waterloo, Ont., with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Psychology. Teena is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Waterloo. Congratulations from your family.</p>				
			<p>Look for our Calendar of Events on page 19...</p>	
				<p>Attention</p> <p>When you fax your display or classified ads to us (particularly obituaries), please type them and check spelling before you transmit the text to us. Thank you.</p>

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L2W 1A1

Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Events	Events	Events	Events
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Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Address change

The Bethel CRC of Newmarket, Ont., now has the following address: 333 Davis Drive, Newmarket, ON L3Y 2N6.



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SALEM
CHRISTIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Marriage Enrichment Weekend

February 25-27, 1994

Leaders:
Herman and Betty Vanderburg
Mike and Shirlene Abma

Place:
Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre
Niagara Falls, Ontario

For further information contact Salem at:

1 Young Street, Suite 512
Hamilton, ON L8N 1T8
(905) 528-0353

Need a break from the February doldrums?
Attend the

Modeling Christ in the Nineties Conference

This annual event will be held from **February 18** (Friday evening) to **February 20** (Sunday noon) at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls, Ont.

Enjoy fellowship, discussion, prayer and walks to the Falls. The main speakers are: George VanderVelde, Nick Overduin and Agnes Kramer-Hamstra.

Registration deadline: **January 31, 1994.**

For more information and registration forms, contact Alice Witvoet at (905) 684-3991 (evenings) or (905) 688-5550, ext. 3412 (days).



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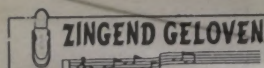
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Look for
Peter and Marja
on page 14...

Calendar

Jan. 16 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, Ancaster, Ont.

Jan. 21-23 Annual "Student/Young Adult Winter Retreat" at Camp Pioneer (Muskoka), Ont. Theme: "University of Jesus." Info.: Freda Heida (519) 433-9798, or Marvin Talsma (519) 850-0583.

Jan. 24 The annual "Christianity & Culture" lecture, 8 p.m., Brock University, St. Catharines, Ont. Speaker: *The Banner* editor Rev. John Suk on "The language of white supremacist religion." For info. call Brock CRC chaplain Rev. Nick Overduin at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3134, or his home (905) 688-1280.

Jan. 26-27 "The Christian, Mass Media and Popular Culture," a conference on interdisciplinary issues at The King's University College, Edmonton, Alta. Main speaker: Stefan Ullstain. Opening and keynote address at 2:30 p.m., Jan. 26. Open to the community. Info.: (403) 465-3500.

Jan. 28 Performing arts concert (instrumental and vocal chamber music), 8 p.m., The King's University College, Edmonton, Alta. Info.: (403) 465-3500.

Jan. 30 City-wide hymn sing led by Rev. Jake Kuipers, 8 p.m., First CRC, Sarnia, Ont. Special music by the "Harvesters

Quartet." Everyone invited!

Feb. 18 "King's View Friday," open house at The King's University College, Edmonton, Alta. Phone Admissions Office at (403) 465-3500 to register.

Feb. 18-20 "Modeling Christ in the Nineties Conference," at the Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls, Ont. Enjoy fellowship, discussion, prayer and walks to the Falls. Main speakers: George VanderVelde, Nick Overduin, and Agnes Kramer-Hamstra. Register by Jan. 31. For info. and registration forms contact Alice Witvoet at (905) 684-3991 (evenings) or (905) 688-5550, ext. 3412 (days).

Feb. 25-26 Marriage preparation seminar at First CRC, 287 Water St., Guelph, Ont. Info. and registration: (519) 822-7720.

April 9 National convention of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, London, Ont. Watch for further details!

Personal Account

You'd better believe it!

Jacoba Bos

Some years ago one more person was added to our ever-growing circle of family and friends. He came to us through our local mental health organization which was looking for volunteers to befriend this young man who has a hearing problem and a vision impairment.

"He is also mentally handicapped," the social worker told my husband and I, when we were introduced to Bruce, who was then in his mid-30s. Bruce had regularly attended the weekly Friendship Bible classes held at our church, but the fear of getting a seizure in a crowd had forced him to give up that outing with his friends.

Bruce winsomely worked his way into our hearts and lives. During his weekly visits to our home we learned about his background, his family and his favorite subject in elementary school. He had been able to attend school until brain damage took its toll.

"Do you know the names of the three oceans?" he'd ask us.

"I do," he'd proudly continue, correctly listing the names of these bodies of water. He showed us pictures of himself as a shy, round-faced eight-year-old surrounded by smiling parents and siblings, and he proudly showed us a photograph of a boy.

"His name is Rafia and I send him money because he doesn't even have good clothes for school." Bruce was obviously appalled to think that such conditions still exist in our affluent society.

We discovered that Bruce is fond of smooth surfaces. He loves to stroke the velvety noses of our horses and to stroke the back of our little dog who, at the sound of Bruce's voice wouldn't rest until she was comfortably nestled in his ample lap. The dog was not allowed to stay there very long because for Bruce, work is important and he had to get on with the job.

"Now, feel this," he said as he handed my husband a piece of hardwood sanded to silky smoothness by his patient hands. "How do you like that? Is it smooth or not?" He gazed proudly at his handiwork, his face almost handsome under the hockey helmet he wears as protection against head injuries.



Bruce holds a smoothly sanded heart-shaped piece of wood.

PHOTO: JACOB A BOS

"How do you think your cousin will like that for a cutting board?" he continued, expectantly looking up while brushing sawdust off his pants.

After we reassured him that the cutting board was indeed fit for the kitchen of the world's greatest chef, and that our cousin would be delighted to have it, he went back to vigorously sanding the already smooth board with the concentration of a schoolboy learning to write.

"Did you ever see a rain-

world. And when God promises something, you'd better believe it. Yes sir, you'd better believe it," he repeated, confident that he had shared this wonderful truth with friends.

That evening as we drove Bruce to his home, a bright rainbow stood out clearly against the ink-blue sky. Bruce did not see this beautiful sight, yet he believed in God's promises with a childlike faith.

A few weeks later, Bruce's mother died. "Bruce may want to talk about it," the social

worker told us while Bruce busied himself with selecting the right sandpaper from his well-stocked supply. His latest assignment was to sand a wooden toy for our grandchild.

Bruce didn't say a word on the way to our house. He came in and sat dejectedly in his chair, the sandpaper lying unused in his lap. Even the dog sensed there was something wrong with Bruce; she lay quietly at his feet, glancing from us to Bruce. Then, slowly the words came. Bruce talked about the cookies his mother used to bake especially for him. He talked about the different places his family had lived and how his mother had always helped him with his homework. He talked about his

own dog, Snoopy, and how his mother had taken care of Snoopy after the dog was hit by a car. "And my mom had brown eyes, just like me," he said as tears welled up.

Then he pulled a big red hankie from his pocket. He wiped his eyes, blew his nose and said brightly, "But God's taking care of my mother now; yeah, God's taking care of her now," he repeated taking up the wood and sandpaper. "My dad bought three graves," he continued. "One for me, one for my dad and one for my mom. So that's where she'll be buried. But God's taking care of her now."

He repeated these words as if to reinforce this comforting truth. Bruce then returned to the work at hand; sanding the wooden toy horse to a velvet-like finish.

In our get-togethers with Bruce he will occasionally mention his mother. The conversation usually ends with him expressing the glorious truth fixed in his mind and heart: that those who die in the Lord are in God's care, because as Bruce puts it: "When God promises something, you'd better believe it!"

"...a bright rainbow stood out clearly against the ink-blue sky"

bow?" he asked us once when we were sitting on the porch after a summer rain had washed fields and gardens, leaving the smell of wet grass and moist earth all around us. We answered Yes to his question, realizing that Bruce with his very limited eyesight would never see this colorful display in the sky again.

"But do you know what it means?" he asked us earnestly, and without awaiting our reply began to answer the question himself.

"When you see a rainbow," Bruce said slowly, carefully enunciating each syllable, "You remember that God will never, never," he paused to see if we were listening, "never send a flood again to destroy the

worker told us while Bruce busied himself with selecting the right sandpaper from his well-stocked supply. His latest assignment was to sand a wooden toy for our grandchild.

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News Digest

Edited by Irene Bom

Opening soon: N.B. abortion clinic

FREDERICTON (CP) — Dr. Henry Morgentaler's plans for an abortion clinic in Fredericton are going ahead, with some staff expected to be hired next month, says a local organizer for the doctor.

There should be no trouble finding nurses and counsellors, Allison Brewer said yesterday, adding there have been a number of applications even though there has been no advertising for the jobs.

The clinic will likely open late next month or early in March, she said.

China to avoid 'inferior' births

BEIJING (Reuters) — China will use abortions and sterilizations "to avoid new births of inferior quality and heighten the standards of the whole population" under a new law submitted to parliament, the official Xinhua news agency reported last month.

Officials presenting the draft law said the country is in "urgent need of such a law to put a stop to the prevalence of abnormal births." Under the draft law people with hepatitis, venereal disease or mental illness would be banned from marrying while carrying the disease. Legislation reaching this stage usually is adopted.

Write 10,000 times

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — One way to right a wrong is to write a lot, one judge believes. Judge Mike Erwin sentenced a shoplifter to write 10,000 times: "I will not steal other people's property."

Another woman, who pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact to a burglary, had to write 10,000 times: "I will not do anything stupid again."

"I just figure it may sink in, and it can't hurt them, anyway," said Erwin, who has issued dozens of such sentences.

Jacoba Bos is a news correspondent and freelance writer living in Strathroy, Ont.